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The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● DECEMBER 1986



“Unto us a Child is born . . . The Prince of Peace”

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DECEMBER 1986

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25 Years Ago!

What was the usual topic of conversation of the devout Jews of our Lord's time? It was the coming of the Messiah. They would wistfully ask: 'When and how would the Messiah come? Would he indeed put down injustice and establish justice, abolish sin and replace it by holiness, stamp out wickedness and cause righteousness to flourish, take away sorrow and give joy instead, destroy war and usher in peace?' It was such questions as these which agitated the minds of devout Hebrews like the aged Simon who 'Waited for the consolation of Israel' and who had been divinely assured that he 'should not taste death before he had seen the Lord's Christ'. And upheld by this promise, he lived an eager life, until one day, both he and the Blessed Virgin Mary, independently led by the Holy Spirit, made their way into the Temple where the Holy Mother, without a word, placed the Divine Babe in the outstretched arms of the aged saint.

—Churchman 1950.

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International Year of Peace



What a Paradox !

Conferences, seminars, festivals and all efforts mostly theoretical and verbal, made by nations to bring peace on earth have failed.

Exhortative speeches and fervent appeals to people for peace and harmony have miserably failed.

Paradoxically enough, this year has witnessed the worst type of terrorism, political uncertainty, confusion and chaos everywhere. 'The Srilankan genocide' where it is said that on average of 18 Tamils are killed everyday; the 'African apartheid', the Middle-East war, the burning Punjab are indeed the most horrifying issues of the year. There seems to be no solution and no end to the carnage.

The situation in South Africa continues to deteriorate everyday. While the World is clamouring for comprehensive, mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa to alter its inhuman and oppressive apartheid policy, America and Britain are opposing the sanctions. The Commonwealth Mini-summit which took place in August this year also ended in fiasco. I was in London and watching the developments. The British press even predicted that the commonwealth would break into pieces. The E.P. G. Commission which included Anglican Archbishop Edward Scott and Dr. Dame Nita Borrow,

W.C.C., warned in its report on South Africa which was submitted earlier that the ever increasing violence might 'cost in lives which may have to be counted in millions... could be the worst bloodbath since the Second World War'. Shocking. This must be stopped. Apartheid must be dismantled. We must raise our voice against this—however small it is. Now the world has become a global village and whatever happens in one corner is bound to affect the other. We need to develop the spirit of internationalism which should help us to surpass our narrow national identity.

In the Punjab, the hardcore terrorists have become more savage than ever before killing innocent people indiscriminately. There seems to be a devilish desperation in the terrorists. Terrorism has become a cult practised by many, disgruntled in one form or the other. There are many 'masked terrorists' who believe in the muscle power seen everywhere. This is deplorable. But to one's dismay there wasn't any effective popular campaign carried against terrorism this year.

There are other angles at which to look into the subject. The dimensions of poverty especially in rural areas are mind-boggling. Poverty and unemployment constitute number one problem facing the country. People are frustrated and to them peace means prosperity a morsel of rice, and a hut to live in. With the spread of the type

of education we now have, unemployment tends to become more and more acute. If this is continued, it might even become explosive. Vocationalisation of education and industrial training institutes seem to be an answer and in any case, more useful than secondary school education, a point at which millions of pupil drop out. The New education policy mooted by the centre is being debated. The Church which was once the pioneer in this sphere should once again offer a lead to the nation to curb the growth of unemployment which threatens peaceful co-existence.

The quest for a just and lasting peace is something which occupies the heart and minds of men of goodwill everywhere. Never has this quest been more imperative than it is today. As we struggle with the problems of economic, moral and ethical crisis, we suddenly find ourselves at the threshold of the nuclear warfare. The fear of another war—This time a total annihilation—is so terrifying that everyone is baffled and greatly disturbed and pushed to stormy circumstances, swirling and turbulent.

It is apt to call this year, the international year of chaos, confusion and war ! All our human efforts have proved futile.

To the rescue of the frustrated and the troubled world which is at the verge of collapse, comes Jesus, the Prince of Peace. He is the only hope and answer ; the only one who can transform the world. Peace comes from Jesus as a ' free gift ' ; such peace the world cannot give. It cannot be achieved by any human endeavour. Resolutions, legislations, statements, summits cannot achieve this. No super power can think of it, for the simple reason that they are the victims of circumstances. Jesus is the master of any situation and nothing is impossible to him. The Church which claims to be the body of Jesus, should be the main influencing force and, as St. Paul puts it, its ' feet should be covered with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace '. This is the Christmas message which we have to proclaim to the world.

—DASS BABU

Christmas Greetings!!
We Wish you All
A Very Happy Christmas



Women in Ministry

MRS. ARUNA GNANADASON, *Madras*

1975 had been set aside as a Year for Women by the UN. To mark this, the *South India Churchman*, the official magazine of the Church of South India, had published an article on women in each issue that year. They were all pertaining to women in the church—of the role women must play in all levels of church life. A decade has passed since that Year for Women was celebrated—and as we celebrate the end of the UN decade, perhaps the time is ripe for a reappraisal of the status of women in the church. True there has been some strides that women have taken forward—the most notable being that of women in ordained ministry. This is now officially sanctioned by the Church of South India and the Church of North India and about 8 Indian women have been ordained and they are serving as presbyters. More women are getting ordained or are getting prepared for ordination in one of the many theological colleges in the country. However, it is to be also recognised that many churches have not begun a debate on the question of ordination of women and some have even closed their doors to any discussions. A lady told me how recently in her church synod a male theologian—who is highly respected—made a categorical statement, 'Women's ordination is against the will of God and cannot be discussed'—and with that the topic and along with it the aspirations of many women in that church was sealed!

The question I would like to raise in this paper however is *not* whether women can and should be ordained as priests and whether they should occupy positions hitherto occupied solely by men. The question is how men and women, created by God as partners in life, 'can share its privileges and responsibilities together. Of course, since men and women are different, sharing the privileges and responsibilities of life in the Church does not mean that women should now do everything that men have done in the past, any more than that men should continue in an exclusive way, to do many things women might also do. Partnership means equal sharing, not competitiveness. What such a sharing may mean concretely, we can say only as we learn through the experience of relationship itself what God's will, in this regard, for His Church may be'.

The context : the church's response

What ultimately is the role we envisage for the church? How do we understand 'ministry' in the world today? Or to be more specific, what is the role of the church in a crisis ridden India?

I would add here a special reference to the position of women in India. It is now becoming an accepted fact that women bear a double burden in the context of a society in chaos. It is indeed a 'sinful' situation that a woman's life—which is human life—is treated with such disrespect and callousness. Cold statistics to indicate the discriminatory treatment women get in all facets of life can be substantiated with individual stories of pain—of dowry deaths; of rape; of domestic violence; of low legal,

educational and health status; of unequal wages and insecurity of tenure and sexual violence in places of work.

What must be borne in mind is that this kind of institutionalised discrimination women face, is to be understood as a systemic 'sin' rooted within the context of a shaky economic, political and social structure, and that the liberation of women is inextricably linked with the liberation of all oppressed groups in society—dalits, tribals, peasants, workers etc.

It is necessary to take stock of this context because it helps us to understand more clearly the challenge that is placed before the 'ministry' of the church today. In this troubled context, the time is ripe to reflect on whether the present clerical model is adequate—whether it is male or female clericalism. The church is called to a servanthood mission of liberation of people from the chains that bind them, if it is to be true to its response to the challenge placed on it by the Suffering Servant, who broke his body on the Cross, a scapegoat for a cruel, wicked world.

This constant hankering after self-protection is not conducive to the tasks before the church. The church's ministry, its mission has to go beyond the narrow confines of its walls into the struggles of the people in society, because that is where the church really is.

Dr. K. C. Abraham in the Abraham Malpan Memorial Lectures 1983, speaking on 'The Life-Style of Christians' gave the example of the missionary involvement in the indigo disputes in the late nineteenth century, to show how Christians have to often forsake their identity in the cause of transformation of unjust structures. I was interested in the account of the missionary involvement in the indigo disputes. The opposition was against the indigo cultivation by the European planters their own country men. The system was such that the poor *ryots* had to yield to the pressure of the *Zamindars* and cultivate indigo. This cultivation was not profitable and it led to the neglect of rice and other crops. The European planters working through the *zamindars* with the support of the police and other government machinery had thus designed a system which exploited the poor *ryots*. Missionaries organized heroic fight against this system and at enormous cost: imprisonment, threat, loss of job, and so on, and succeeded in changing it.

'We should also notice how in their fight they were in solidarity with all the victims regardless of their caste or religion. It is true that they were led to the fight when they saw the hardship of some of the poor Christians. But when the fight was directed to a system they had to broaden their base and include everyone who was subjected to the evils of the system. A deeper involvement in social issues borne out by our commitment to the Gospel takes us to an open arena of human suffering. It is also interesting that when they stood by the exploited people they had to oppose their own fellow 'Christians'. In a

context like that, an alliance for the sake of perpetuating a so-called Christian identity was not so important as establishing solidarity with the suffering masses who were not necessarily Christians'.

A discussion on the task or mission of the church is not merely a question of the Church going out to the people and involving itself. 'The general subject is "serving the human family around us"'. This sounds paternalistic, as though I was better than my brother and could do something for him. When Jesus, at the end, gave an example of humility by washing the feet of His disciples, He made this basic for Christ-like service always. Christians have done much good. We walk in the trail of dedicated missionaries, both western and Indian. Nevertheless, this "better than you" spirit must disappear if we are to render a true Christian witness. We are members of Body of Jesus Christ, the Church. However, we are also, in the world, members of the community without regard to caste, creed or any other human distinction. The Christian church has yet to learn this if it would make its Christian witness. All too often, we go out from our "Christian compound" and talk about the Messiah. This has had good results; nevertheless a profound weakness appears today in such a witness, cautions the revered missionary, Rev. R. R. Keithahn.

Women in ministry

It is in such a context that we need to discuss the role of women in the ministry. Women too often are subtly pressurized to operate according to male rules and to emulate male models and they unfortunately become instruments for maintaining the patriarchal culture of the church. The role of women in the ministry would therefore be, not so much to maintain the status quo as women taking on tasks that men were doing. Our purpose should be to transform the hierarchical, authoritarian structures of the Church and to transform the theology, the liturgy, the symbols, and the patterns of ministry so that the Church would recognise its messianic role in the Indian society today.

Theology : a new perspective

What is needed is a radical restructuring of theological thought. The Indian Church which has been a victim of western patriarchal theology has not been able to situate an Indian Christian's faith perspective meaningfully into the history and life experience of Indian people. Apart from a small section of theologians who make attempts to explore faith in a multi-religious context, recognizing the need to build a common culture without communal overtones, generally the trend has been to understand faith in very limited individualistic, personal pietistic terms.

Women's search for humanhood

Indian women have begun their own explorations into a theology and spirituality that will empower them to break out of the enclaves of silence that have kept them restricted to patriarchal boundaries for centuries. Women have begun a journey to their roots, to the spirit and purpose for which they were created and from this to search for what it means to be a woman in the Indian Church and society today. In November 1984, the All India Council of Christian Women with the Association of Theologically Trained Women in India and Catholic women organised

a National level Consultation, 'Towards a theology of humanhood: women's perspectives'. The purpose of this Consultation was to reconstruct women's early Christian history and 'recapture the dimension of the resurrection for past sufferings and defeats and open up a new path into the future'.

What we see happening among women is a critique of existing patterns of ministry, liturgy and practices of the Church, a discovering and recovering of traditions that challenge patriarchal institutions and an attempt to develop an ecclesiology that expresses itself in church structures that safeguard women's participation. What women are doing is to highlight neglected Biblical texts and reinterpret familiar ones—a process of reappropriating women's Biblical heritage from the perspective of the losers.

Women have drawn great strength from understanding the early Christian beginnings—particularly from the Jesus community. It was a community which offered an egalitarian not a hierarchical social order; offering love and acceptance to all particularly to the disinherited and suffering poor, to sinners, tax gatherers, prostitutes—the scum of the earth. It was a counter-cultural movement and from this women have drawn power.

Ministry of the Church no human expedient

In all facets of the ministry women and men must participate because the ministry of the Church is not a human invention or expedient, but is the result of divine revelation and appointment (1 Cor. 12 : 28 ; Eph. 4 : 11-13). And 'the fact that humankind exists in two different sexes is not some fortuitous evolutionary accident. It is an expression of the purpose of God.' (Mark 10 : 6).

Christ through His ministry was renewing and transforming a new ministry, shaking people out of their dogmatic ways, purifying a social and economic system that was discriminatory. He was not interested in building a church nor did he establish a set pattern for ministry for all times. Paul on the other hand had the task of building a church. In his effort to create a new ethos he issued norms of behaviour and discipline which were drawn from the patriarchal society to which he belonged. If the Christian communities were to grow, develop and even survive they *had* to take over the institutionalised structures of the society. The more structured and institutionalised the Church became, the more patriarchal it became and women were excluded from ecclesiastical leadership.

The movements for change that sweep through the world today, particularly in this context the women's movement, challenge the Church to discover what God's will for the people is. To respond to this challenge and to recognise the abilities and talents of all people—women, men and children—in the Church, is to discover what ministry in the world today means. Ultimately, the ministry of the Church is to work with progressive forces in the Church and society to usher in a world of God's shalom. The Indian Church, both its women and men, must courageously cut through the barbed wire of cultural custom and fear of change and follow the One who promised men and women, 'If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed'. The new woman is moving out of the historical context that has enslaved her, and is seeking acceptance and wholeness in a new community so as to play her role effectively in creating a new world.

Christology in the Context

DR. GNANA ROBINSON, *Madurai*

The Relevance of the Person and work of Christ for Church and Society

Preamble

The recently started Centre for Peace and Justice at Kanyakumari organized a Consultation on Christology between the 7th and 10th October, 1986. The most significant aspect of the Consultation was that five Bishops of the Church of South India, a Colonel of the Salvation Army, some pastors and many lay persons constituted the participants. The Moderator of the Church of South India, the Most Rev. I. Jesudasan, was one of the five bishops present throughout. His contributions were helpful in leading the consultation towards a consensus. The proceedings were ably guided by the Rev. Dr. Gnana Robinson, Principal of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary and the Chairman of the Centre for Peace and Justice and by the Rt. Rev. C. Selvamony, former Bishop of Kanyakumari, the Co-ordinator of the Centre.

Papers were presented and discussed on the importance of Interfaith Dialogue (Dr. S. J. Samartha), Biblical Perspectives on Christology (Fr. Alloysius Xavier), Patristic Models of Christology (Rev. Tim Gorringe), Indian Models of Christology (Dr. K. P. Aleaz) and on Practical Approaches in presenting Christ Today (Dr. D. Carr). Plenary discussions on the papers and group discussions on specific issues arising out of the papers were conducted. The following joint declaration was unanimously agreed upon and is presented for discussion and study to all fellow Christians.

The Declaration

In India where there are people of many faiths living and working together, we find that Christian Communication must take place only in a spirit of openness. This spirit of openness compels us to recognize that people who adhere to other faiths also are people of God and in their own ways are being used by God in carrying out His ultimate purposes.

The above recognition does not rule out the distinctiveness of any faith nor its distinctive insights, self-understanding, sacraments, traditions, value perceptions and cultural modes of expressions. Therefore, there is a great deal of opportunity for mutual enrichment as well as for mutual challenge. We must be willing to learn, willing to share, open to be challenged and ready to challenge. It is with this assumption, we would now turn to assess more specifically how Christ has been perceived and how He should be presented.

We find that, within the Bible itself and in the subsequent history, there is a variety of Christologies. This variety arose as a result of attempts to present Christ in a meaningful way in different cultural, religious, socio-economic and political contexts. In the present day, however, except for the religious perception that Christ is the mediator between God and the believer, all other aspects have been

lost sight of, for we have failed to contextualise Christ. Nevertheless, several attempts at understanding the significance of Christ have been made by a few people and groups. Therefore, as we set out to formulate a relevant Christology, our first task has to be to take note of some of these attempts.

In this respect, we limit our scope to the three different models of Indigenous Christology presented to us namely (1) Reception Model in which Advaita categories are accepted and used as they are understood by Hindus, (2) The Reinterpretation Model in which Advaita categories are reinterpreted to suit Christian understanding of God as personal and (3) the Hindu Model in which Hindu scholars' attempts to understand Christ are taken note of. Although it is very difficult to say which one of these must be our model, we can point to a few positive insights emerging out of all three models: (1) The interpretation of Jesus' word 'I and my Father are one' using 'Aham Brahmasmi'—This paves the way to overcome the age-long rigid distinction maintained between divinity and humanity. (2) The emphasis on detachment and renunciation may be seen to speak relevantly to the increasing craving for amassing wealth and the growing attachment to material possessions and (3) The possibility for understanding the concept of Trinity in terms of *Sat Chit Ananda*. It does not mean, however, that these are the only possible indigenous models. There have been attempts to work out a Christology on the basis of *Saiva Siddhanta* and some others based on other systems. The three referred to here are mere pointers.

While we appreciate these valid and positive contributions, we must not however, forget the fact that eminent persons such as the late P. D. Devanandan and Dr. S. J. Samartha have felt that Advaita categories are not conducive for making Christ relevant to the contemporary socio-political and socio-economic contexts of India. Therefore, perhaps we should look for a more comprehensive Christological model.

In our endeavour to formulate a comprehensive Christology, first of all we would like to affirm categorically our belief that in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God was involved in human history in a most decisive and normative way. And, on this affirmation alone could we believe that God has a specific purpose for human history.

We recognise that perceptions of the significance of this act of God will always be twofold. On the one hand, there will be the religious dimension and on the other hand the secular dimension.

The religious perception would need to be conceptualised and interpreted, using available indigenous philosophical categories. We need have no fear regarding this.

The early Church history proves abundantly that contemporary philosophies which tenaciously held to the impossibility of God and to the impossibility of God becoming human could not wipe out the revealed truths about God suffering for us and of God's becoming human in order to suffer. Therefore, we must be bold in using Indian categories even if they don't seem to be conducive in every respect. For, in no other way could we speak meaningfully with people who think using these categories.

The secular dimension has been the most neglected dimension. Therefore we would now like to point out the imperatives in this regard. For this, first of all, we need to take the witness of the Gospels to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus seriously. Secondly, we need to avoid all religious cliches and make Christ relevant to the secular world.

For instance, the Gospels unanimously testify that Jesus was uniquely free from (1) the way in which Judaism legitimized separation between faith and politics, male chauvinism, religious exclusivism . . . etc. and (2) the way in which relationship between God and humans and among one another in the human community was conceived [in legalistic terms To give a few concrete examples we could refer to, his radical understanding of the Sabbath, his treatment of men and women as equals, his consistent concern for the poor and his uncompromising stand against Mammon, his friendship with the so-called sinners and the outcasts of the religious elite

It must be remembered that Jesus was killed because the religion and culture of his day could not tolerate him. But God vindicated Him by raising Him from the dead. Therefore, any attempt to delineate the significance of his death and resurrection must take into account the religious and political causes which led to his crucifixion. When we confess this Jesus as the One who was raised, we confess that God was provided a new and abiding way to reverse the adverse trends and to consummate human history resulting in the New Humanity. The sinful, exploitative and oppressive ways are decisively reversed in and through Jesus. This event of renunciation of the self in service of others and the resultant conviction that this event has initiated the process of bringing into fruition a new humanity marked with justice, love, peace and harmony, is the central core of the Christian faith.

This conviction, however, is the core of Christian faith. Therefore, it is our firm belief that the Church has been and will continue to be an important instrument of change. It has to play an important role in communicating the counter-culture values of the New Humanity manifested in Jesus. This process is termed a mystery in the New Testament. Jesus met with his death mainly because he embodied these values and the world steeped in other values (both religious and secular) which legitimized inequality and injustice could not accommodate him. The resurrection of Jesus, however, opened the way for those who accept the risen Lord and His purpose to become the pioneers and a living model of the New Humanity. Although the Church has not always lived in accordance with this self-understanding, there is ample evidence that from time to time, it has been made to realise its proper identity. During such periods, the Church has contributed much to social change and to proper direction to human history. We believe that yet once more such a time has come. There is an awakening in the whole world about the existing structures of inequality and injustice

which lead to exploitation and marginalisation. At the same time reactionary forces are also gathering momentum. People who profess to believe in God are found on both sides. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the Church to rediscover its true identity as the Body of the One who was put to death because of his concern for justice and equality. The same fate awaits all those who find their identity in the crucified One. But the same way in which God reversed the tragedy of the Cross, our commitment to Christ and consequent failures and tragedies also will be turned into lasting victories contributing to the final consummation. We call upon all Christians to be united in this faith and in all actions such a faith would lead us into.

Recommendations

The above declaration is in no way complete, nor does it seek to spell out all the practical implications. But we are confident that it sets a definite direction. In this confidence we call upon all concerned to examine carefully whether the direction set forth is accord with the portrayal of Jesus in the Bible, and if so convinced, then to seek ways and means of setting the course for the Church in that direction. Towards this we make the following recommendations :

- (1) We recommend that systematic study of the life and teachings of Jesus, the actual historical causes for his death, the various shades of meaning perceived about the significance of his death and about the nature and significance of his resurrection, be undertaken, not just by pastors and professional theologians but by all members of the Church.
- (2) We also recommend a serious and regular study of society and an analysis of the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural forces at work.
- (3) We recommend that our churches take the study of the religions of our neighbours seriously. This will promote better understanding, enable us to understand the common traits of all religions, the distinctiveness of the Christian faith and its relationship to people of other faiths.
- (4) We also recommend that, in order to realize the above aims, the Synods and authorities of the Church give top priority to the preparation and distribution of study materials and create structures to ensure that these materials are put to regular use.
- (5) Real understanding can emerge only in the context of action. Therefore we also recommend initiating dialogue groups with a view to engaging in common action for social change.
- (6) Finally, we recommend that full use be made of the available resources in Theological institutions and in organizations such as the Centre for Peace and Justice to equip the churches in initiating study and action programmes. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Centre for Peace and Justice has offered to organise study groups in places other than Kanyakumari to suit the convenience of the groups.

Theological Education in the Life of the Church in India—Pastor's Point of View

REV. ARUN GOPAL*

Theological education and the life of the Church are closely related in the Indian context. The churches depend on theological colleges for training their ministerial candidates. Church representatives are involved in the policy formulation and decision-making processes of the theological colleges. At times churches do make financial contribution for theological education. Theological colleges on the other hand use the struggles and challenges of the pastor's parish ministry as the raw material for their theological reflections. It is also true that theological institutions can strive to transform the society as well as the country only by equipping the clergy and the laity adequately for their mission.

I. Pastoral Ministry—a cursory look

Theological colleges describe the ministry of a pastor as that of a *servant, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, priest* and an *ecumenist*. In practice the seminary curriculum attempts to prepare the candidate to be a theologian, scholar, performer of religious rites, counsellor, social worker and preacher. When the theological student enters the parish as a pastor he conducts communion services, cottage prayers, programmes for women, youth and children. (In some churches pastors can celebrate eucharist only after they are ordained as presbyters). He has to do house-visitation and train confirmands and catechumens. Then comes the time when he has to face the pastorate committee meetings and frictions in his congregation. He is called to settle disputes in the Church and work for reconciliation in the families. Apart from maintaining Church records he has financial and administrative responsibilities too. There are occasions when a few pastors and their family members have washed the altar cloths, church floor and set the furniture ready for worship when the churches could not afford a full-time sexton. On the other hand Church authorities exercise their right and load the pastors with additional responsibilities as house wardens or managers, correspondents of one or more high school(s) or elementary school(s), youth workers and conveners of committees. Amidst their parish ministries which demand much of their time and energy some pastors aspire to become members of several committees and boards and a few pastors are called to hold key offices in their churches.

In the above discussion it may be noted that pastors are faced with a variety of tasks. They have to play different roles. Even though the seminaries, churches and the candidates themselves are aware of the traditional tasks of the pastoral ministry, in reality they are rather ill-defined. The newly ordained minister fresh from the theological college realises that he is in an altogether different world. The predicament of those persons cannot be explained easily. They feel incompetent and ill-prepared to handle the new situation. The tension is much reduced if they

happen to be under an understanding, sympathetic and caring senior pastor. But that is not always the case. The student who has exhibited qualities of leadership in the seminary, his academic abilities in the examinations and commitment through his involvement in the devotional exercises in the college feels utterly lonely and helpless. His family members and some of the parishioners might provide him support. Still there is a deep seated disappointment that he was not informed that parish ministry involves 'all these things'. Irrespective of his inner struggles the congregation expects the young pastor to fit in to their frame of reference as it were. He is regarded as a finished product (though just out of the seminary) ready to be used in any way by the Church.

In the case of the newly ordained ministers, the frustration is due to lack of knowledge about what pastoral ministry involves and a sense of inadequacy to take their place immediately in the Church structure. Pastors who have been in the ministry for some years too, feel frustrated at times as seen above. The reason for their frustration is that they wish to do every thing perfectly and satisfy everybody and themselves too but at the end they realise that their efforts have been counter-productive or not altogether successful. In both the cases the question is as to who is to be held responsible—is it theological education or the churches? The churches feel that 3-4 years of theological training must shape their candidates as efficient pastors in whatever capacity they are called to serve the Church. But the perspective or the thrust of the theological colleges has been rather different.

II. Pastoral Ministry and Theological Education

It is possible that the theological institutions find themselves in a rather difficult situation. If they take seriously the life of the Church in India (both urban and rural situations) they should wrestle with this issue and seek to find solutions. The two alternatives before the theological colleges are the following. (a) They can turn a deaf ear to the cry of the churches and carry on with their normal pattern of training ministers either to accomplish the traditional tasks or whatever they see appropriate in the present Indian context. (b) Theological colleges need to enter into a dialogue with Church authorities and analyse critically the Church situation and the problems as well as challenges of parish ministry to see where exactly the problem lies. During the dialogue the churches might realise that the pastors trained for 3-4 years should be used only for the purpose of nurturing the members and equipping them for their mission in the world as the agents of Christ. The churches might also wish to make use of

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the potentialities of their laity if necessary giving them proper training so that the clergy might be relieved to equip themselves through constant study, prayer and reflection to cater to the needs of their parishioners through various types of ministries. Not only at the higher level but also at the level of the local congregation resourceful and committed laity can be used in administration, preaching, worship, and other programmes wherever the presence of the pastor is not absolutely essential.

Theological education in general and individual institutions in particular declare that ordained ministry is their basic concern in spite of their other interests. *The Report of Study Programme and Consultation* of the Board of theological education of NCCI and Senate of Serampore college lays down that 'Responsible pastors for full-time ordained ministry of the Word and sacraments is the first and foremost objective of all theological institutions in India. Some of these institutions also care for other ministries such as leadership in the Church, teaching, etc.' In practice this is true only with regard to a few colleges. There are colleges which try to hold a balance between pastoral training and theological research.

III. Pastor's Critique of Theological Education

Theological colleges are critical of the 'ghetto type of Church life'. They call the churches to be sensitive to the struggles and sufferings of the people. It is said that instead of calling the society the Church should venture out. But the three or four year period in preparation to the ministry is provided in the 'seminary with compound walls'. The student studies and reflects about his vocation and ministerial tasks as a member of this isolated community. A more appropriate place for theological reflection is a village, slum, hospital or a busy area in city. Being in a community is different from being in a college. In the society the student is faced with real issues. It will be an occasion to struggle for answers, work out a theological basis for his own ministry and above all he prepares himself mentally and there is a sense of readiness. What is said above is more applicable to the final year students. Prior to that it is helpful to the students if a faculty member stays with them during short periods of practical work enabling them to think and reflect theologically.

Oppressive and exploitative structures have to be challenged. The theological students are much inspired during their training period and are determined to fight these evil forces tooth and nail. But once they return to their churches or congregations on many occasions they either work hand in hand with the forces of oppression and exploitation or suffer victimisation. The problem is that they are not able to identify the subtle forms of oppression and exploitation and also have no experience of passing through a similar crisis. It is essential that theological seminaries pay attention to this important area. It needs to be remembered that being taught to fight oppression or exploitation is different from actually fighting it. On many occasions the theological students leave the colleges with 'gaps in their understanding' because some of those who teach them have had no experience themselves and were unable to answer their questions.

IV. Recommendations

1. For a period 2-3 years a set of subjects may be taught with opportunities for practical experience. At the end of that period may be for a year or six months, rigorous supervised training in scientific research may be provided for those who wish to pursue higher studies and join teaching professions.
2. It has to be considered seriously whether pastoral ministry could be the major focus at B.D. level for colleges which provide facilities for M.Th., and D.Th., which are mainly research programmes or pastoral ministry being the focus of a seminary, it might offer other special courses for laity and also research facilities as off-shoots.
3. If a college is concerned with pastoral training it is essential that a sizeable number of professors with at least 5-10 years of pastoral experience are provided. If there are laymen and women in the teaching staff they too should have been involved in some form of parish ministry.
4. The colleges could have a small number of 'core staff' for the continuity of the college. The rest may be appointed on a termly basis. That would bring fresh insights from the parish situation or other areas of ministry.
5. In a country such as India the vast majority is ruled by the elitist minority. The Church reflects the same. In a sense the clergy appear to be the ruling elite. This hinders the witness of the Church. Ministry too suffers. Hence the theological colleges have a dual task to accomplish. Just training lay leaders does not serve the purpose. The Clergy who are trained in these seminaries need to see their role more as enablers of the lay people in carrying on the several ministries of the Church.

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Christmas Message

DR. EMILIO CASTRO, *W.C.C. Geneva*

(This message for Christmas from General Secretary Emilio Castro of the World Council of Churches was translated from the Spanish by the WCC language service.)

'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will towards men.'

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God'.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The year that is ending has been designated the year of peace by the United Nations Organization. A quick panoramic view of the world tells us how far we are from eliminating the scourge of war in relations between nations and peoples.

For us Christians, concern for peace is not a response to political planning or decisions by assemblies. Rather it is centred in the very heart of our faith, in the affirmation that God was in Christ, breaking down all the barriers that separate human beings, reconciling them and their Creator, and thus providing us with the foundation for every kind of reconciliation among the peoples.

Christmas, in the angels' song, invites us to celebrate the 'glory of God in the highest' and to devote ourselves passionately and hopefully to proclaiming God's peace and God's good will towards humanity.

Jesus Christ recognized the ministry of peace as one of God's great blessings: 'The peacemakers will be called the children of God'.

As we gather in our homes or meet in our services and liturgical celebrations to remember what Christmas is about, let us focus our attention this year on the message of peace and the promise of its achievement and on the call to be peacemakers which is properly ours.

On different occasions throughout this year we have called on the churches to pray for peace and justice in specific situations, such as South Africa or Central America, but also to pray for peace in general, particularly too for understanding among the great powers.

We must persevere in this ministry of prayer.

'If the Lord does not build the house, they labour in vain that build it.'

If peace does not come from the presence of the Holy Spirit illuminating minds and softening hearts, it will be very difficult to conquer the ideological barriers which are today hardening points of view and shutting off the possibilities for agreement.

Let us pray for those who govern the great powers let us pray for the peoples of those lands; let us be with

the churches of the Soviet Union and the United States of America in their purpose of proclaiming a call to peace for their respective nations!

But let us also pray for the local conflicts where opposing factions are trying to find a solution to their differences by means of fratricidal wars!

And how could we fail to include in our prayers the whole southern part of Africa, the wars in Sudan and Ethiopia, the fratricidal struggles in the Middle East, the agonizing conflict between Iran and Iraq, and the battles raging in Afghanistan and Kampuchea?

There is no doubt that from your own national standpoint you can include in this list other specific situations which in our desperation we must put before God, praying, 'O Lord, grant us peace!'

Our prayers, however, must be accompanied by a clear proclamation: Peace is possible. God in Christ has already overcome the great barriers. We cannot accept that war and hatred should be the way to solve human conflicts or disagreements.

To affirm peace is itself a contribution to its achievement in history. But we can do more. We can maintain contacts with peoples and human groups represented as being our enemies; we can show that ecumenical solidarity among the churches enables us to overcome the conflicts dividing our nations and to place ourselves everywhere in the service of peace and reconciliation.

We can avoid identifying the other with the devil, and using religious convictions to increase the burden of hatred; and on the other hand, from our contemplation of the cross of Jesus Christ, we can abandon our claims to superiority and accept each other as sinners looking for forgiveness, brothers and sisters looking for reconciliation.

The increasing armaments race invites us to proclaim more vigorously than ever that peace is possible and that through constructive non-violence there are many possibilities for overcoming prevailing injustices.

Faced with the madness of a world that is capable of self-destruction, let us affirm the madness of the cross, of non-violence, of turning the other cheek, of the outstretched hand, of faith that God does still reign!

Let us look at the child of Bethlehem, the bearer of the hopes and dreams and promises of God for all humanity!

And in contemplating him, let us make it possible for the Holy Spirit to generate in each one of us a relationship of love towards our neighbour, and to open up our imagination and our understanding in the search for approaches to peace!

PEACE

MOST REV. I. JESUDASAN, *the Moderator*

The International Year of Peace is coming to its close. Nothing significant which goes into history has been achieved in the year, though the world super powers had a series of peace talks. Deadly weapons are in the increase, terrorism is growing, racial and communal violence remain unabated. Drug abuse and alcoholism continue to ruin many a good lives and families. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening year after year. The International Year of Peace has not performed any miracle in establishing peace on earth.

Again at the Christmas tide, we listen to the usual proclamations: 'Glory to God in Highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased' (Luke 2:14). 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life' (St. John 3:16).

Do we really believe in these peace announcements and act on them? Then, and then only will we find peace. There is no hope till we believe and act. God has announced liberation and reconciliation in Jesus Christ and has thus paved the way to peace with God and with one another. Reconciliation among men brings peace in this world, and wrong relationships create conflicts, violence and death. 'Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other' (Ps. 85:10). In these words the Psalmist speaks how peace emerges from the union of love, faithfulness and righteousness.

The Christmas call to peace comes to us in this context of hopelessness.

1. The maladies of sin deep-rooted in our personal and social life cannot easily be eradicated. We are victims of anger, quarrel and litigation in our day to day life. Our self-centered life continues to create disharmony in us and among our neighbours. This is true of our society too. Evil structures—socio-economic and political—inherited by us from the past and the new ones we create bind us and make us victims of such principalities and powers. Our helplessness is true and terrible. Self examination and patience are required in our search for a new order of things. The age-old racial and caste prejudices, superstitious beliefs, lack of trust in others and exploitative system need to be judged in the light of the peace offered by God in Jesus Christ. God's love can open our eyes to see the image of God shining in other persons, cultures and nations. St. Paul says 'the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the Sons of God' (Rom. 8:20).

2. God in Christ has involved in human affairs. 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. 'Immanuel' means 'God with us'. In our tragic situation of helplessness, God is with us'. In Jesus Christ God has identified himself with the poor and the oppressed. The N.T. says that Jesus became poor and took the form of a slave and suffered the death of a criminal on a cross. This world denied Him peace and justice as it had done to millions in the world. In Him we see the plight of the wronged humanity. Howbeit He remained in unfathomable serenity of peace with God His Father and with God's creation, knowing fully well that he was doing God's will and God's purposes will be brought to fruition in and through His sufferings for the world. In His resurrection the forces of death were defeated and victory was won. This is our assurance and hope for the ultimate victory of God's purposes and establishment of God's Kingdom of peace and justice. The author of the Book of Hebrews writes: 'He (Abraham) looked forward to the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God' (Heb. 11:10). With this sure hope in the coming Kingdom, let us be firm in our resolve and continue to struggle for peace.

3. The coming of the Kingdom of God on earth will be the greatest revolution of all and this revolution has already begun since Jesus Christ lived, died and risen from the dead. The conflict between the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the conventional ideas and orders of men came plainly and unmistakably to a head in the crucifixion of Christ. When the Church is true to its task, conflicts can arise from time to time both in the proclamation about the coming Lord before whom, in the end, all earthly authority must bow and when the Gospel begins to manifest in our personal life-style and in our community life. This life-style and decisions can never fail to influence life and behaviour of other men. This is the beginning of a process which has taken hold of the lives of many nations and cultures. Christian history has ample evidence to show how the way of living and the social ordinances of many communities came to be transformed almost unnoticed. So what is required of us is to order our personal life, community life and institutional life in such a way that they promote peace and justice in our times. Till the time of the full manifestation of God's Kingdom of peace and justice, let us continue our struggle, risking even our own security for the sake of peace in as much as God's love compels us to.

Super Power, Third-World Reps. Discuss Nuclear Disarmament

GENEVA—Two high-ranking disarmament negotiators—Aleksandr Obukov of the Soviet Union and Henry Cooper of the US—set forth (separately) their own and their government's views on nuclear disarmament issues during a three-day consultation on 'militarism and the arms race'.

The consultation marked the 40th anniversary of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (part of the World Council of Churches).

Following their presentations, J. S. Teja, Indian Ambassador here to the UN, offered reflections from the perspective of the 'Six Nation Initiative' on these issues by India, Greece, Tanzania, Argentina, Mexico and Sweden.

Obukov, first to speak, said the time has come for the superpowers to take fundamental political decisions—and to come clear on whether mutual agreements are possible. He also said the whole world has a stake in these matters: 'When we talk about preserving peace, there can be no indifferent side observers, any nation big or small, socialist or capitalist, is important, every political party is needed to make radical changes for peace.'

He said the Soviet side strongly favours a ban on all new types of weapons, while at the same time agreeing on a nuclear-arms ban. But he said, 'one thing is to agree on verifying what goes on in the labs, and the other is what happens when these weapons are ready for deployment. If they don't get used, then there is no need for them to exist. The easiest way of verification and arms control is to prevent the appearance of new kinds of weapons. When they don't exist there is no need to control them.'

Obukov said his government 'naturally follow the tendencies in public opinion very closely all over the world. This new way of thinking gave birth to the anti-nuclear protest.' In conclusion, he observed, 'Not everything can be solved on one side, when you have negotiations between two.'

Cooper, a Methodist become Presbyterian, began with a brief account of his own religious journey, including his 'profession of faith' four decades ago, and the conviction that the 'sovereign God has been working in my life'. He said that in his current position with the US side in the arms-reduction talks, God is teaching him patience, 'an important requirement for negotiating with the Soviets'.

He described the 'democracies of the West' as 'basic . . . outgrowths of the religious order', while 'totalitarianism . . . is an expression of the destructive side' of humanity. He spoke of the 'brutalities of the Soviet system, and its infringement upon . . . (fundamental) liberties'. He said 'we cannot rely on trust alone' in dealing with the Soviet Union. In answer to a question, he said he did not mean to speak ill of the Soviet people, but rather to criticize their government, which 'is an evil'.

Cooper said he has 'wrestled with' the question of the morality of the strategy of nuclear deterrence, and concluded that it is acceptable under the circumstances. Nonetheless, he described the US proposal for a space-based defence against nuclear missiles (the 'strategic defence initiative', sometimes referred to as the 'star wars' proposal) as a 'better way' than the current arrangements, because its premise is 'defending oneself', rather than 'restraint' by one's opponent.

Teja said 'something (is) basically wrong' with the current international armaments system. He also highlighted the 'very important role' of 'public opinion' on such issues, and the 'moral authority' of the Six-Nation Initiative.

He called for a 'co-operative' rather than a 'confrontational' approach to security questions. It is a matter, he said, 'which can no longer be left to the nuclear-weapons powers'.

During an afternoon which focused on the CCIA anniversary, WCC General Secretary Emilio Castro called it history one of 'agony and faithfulness'. He added 'It's not our work; it's the work of God himself'.

Castro gave Nancy Nolde, a church communicator in Philadelphia, and widow of O. Frederick Nolde, CCIA director from 1946 to 1969, the first copy of a new, brief history of CCIA, 'Christian Response in a World of Crisis', by Ans van der Bent, the WCC librarian.

Main speaker at the anniversary session was Jovito Salonga, president of the Presidential Commission for Good Government, the group responsible in the Philippines for recovering money and other assets taken from the country by deposed President Ferdinand Marcos. Salonga is also a former commission member.

Outlining what led to the peaceful 'people's victory' which overthrew Marcos, and his own trials during the Marcos period, Salonga said many problems remain in the Philippines, not least efforts to maintain the 'delicate balance' between those who emphasize 'justice' and those who stress 'order' in the wake of the change of government there.

He said his own work involves undoing the 'wholesale plunder of an entire nation', the years of 'kleptocracy' by Marcos and his 'cronies'.

Offering 'theological and ethical reflections on militarism' during another consultation session, Burgess Carr, a Liberian Anglican priest who is a consultant on human and ethical issues in African development, and former general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, said that 'in the context of underdevelopment, militarism becomes a social-justice issue'.

He said military expenditures are such a large part of third-world budgets that 'the poor and vulnerable in society are forced to carry a disproportionate burden of the human costs of economic austerity: higher food prices, lower and irregular wages, increased unemployment, landlessness, cuts in social spending for nutrition and literacy programmes'.

Carr called 'issues of hunger, racism, sexism, torture, militarism, the arms race, etc. . . . faith issues'. He noted also that 'militarism is a dependence phenomenon in the third world' which 'undermines self-reliance and participation . . . corrupts social and cultural values, and destroys the spirit of hope'. In contrast, he called for an 'ethics of hope' which will 'inspire a renewed dependence, the dependence of faith . . . in God'.

In the same session, Gabriel Habib, general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, outlined the situation in Lebanon. In summing up, he asked whether Christians are able to 'live today in our world of division, of injustice, and destruction' with the 'creative power of the Trinity. Can we live again the power of the resurrection?' —EPS

Tamilnad Christian Council Triennial Assembly—1986

DR. MITHRA J. EBENEZER, *Secretary*

The Triennial Assembly of the Tamilnad Christian Council was held on the 18th & 19th October, 1986, at the New Jerusalem Church, Tranquebar and at the Tranquebar Bishop Manickam Lutheran College, Porayar, Thanjavur District, in the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church area.

About 40 delegates and other Special Invitees and Visitors from the various Churches Dioceses Organisations representing the different denominations participated in the Triennial Assembly.

The theme for the Assembly was

'He must increase but I must decrease'.

—*St. John 3 : 30*

The Rev. A. George Karunakaran, Secretary, CSI Madras Diocese was the main speaker and he delivered three addresses on the theme. In his talk he emphasised humility in the ministry of John the Baptist, who projected Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour and showed the example for our missionary work. He brought out clearly the various aspects of how the church could be a witnessing church, viz, witnessing the love of Christ, the Service for Christ, the forgiveness of Christ to the community. He further stated that the church is the preparer—

- to prepare the worker for peace ;
- to prepare the World for reconciliation ; and
- to prepare the world to receive the good news of salvation.

Rt. Rev. Jayaseelan Jacob, Vice-President, presided over the meetings. Dr. Jayakaran Isaac, Principal, Voorhees College, Vellore, conducted the opening devotion. He detailed the qualities of John the Baptist and the way he humiliated himself and proclaimed Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

In his presidential address, Rt. Rev. Jayaseelan Jacob called upon the members of the Assembly to propagate

the word of God emulating the illustrious example of John the Baptist who led the people to God and condemned the sins of the people in no uncertain terms. He further said that John the Baptist lowered himself in order to elevate Christ.

Dr. Mithra J. Ebenezer, Secretary of the Tamilnad Christian Council and the Director of the Economic Life Committee presented a detailed report on the various activities of the Council and the rural development programmes of the Economic Life Committee.

A Cultural programme was presented by the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ambur Synod, under the leadership of the Rev. John Sundaram, Convener, Evangelism Committee of the Tamilnad Christian Council on the 18th October evening after dinner.

The following were elected to be the office-bearers and conveners of the Committees for this triennium period.

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| 1. <i>President</i> | .. | Rt. Rev. Jayaseelan Jacob,
Bishop of Tranquebar,
Tamil Evangelical Lutheran
Church. |
| 2. <i>Vice-President</i> | .. | Rt. Rev. Dr. Paulraj,
Bishop, CSI-Trichy-Tanjore
Diocese. |
| 3. <i>Hon. Treasurer</i> | .. | Dr. Jayakaran Isaac,
Principal,
Voorhees College,
CSI-Vellore Diocese. |
| 4. <i>Convener,
Economic Life
Committee</i> | .. | Mr. L. S. Mohandoss,
I.E.L.C. |
| 5. <i>Convener,
Evangelism
Committee</i> | .. | Rev. J. John Sundaram,
I.E.L.C. |
| 6. <i>Secretary</i> | .. | Dr. Mithra J. Ebenezer |

In Christ: Power of Women

An Ecumenical Assembly of Women Meets in Madras

'We the women of the IV Assembly of the All India Council of Christian Women (Sub-Unit of the National Council of Churches) representing the major protestant and Orthodox churches in India, claim the stories of women in the Bible as our own story. The Creator God's plan for a fruitful and equal partnership of men and women in the stewardship of the earth has been frustrated by the sinfulness of human beings. Women and men have been made in the image of God but an exploitative society and patriarchal attitudes have marginalised women and discounted their worth and witness from Old Testament times to the present day'. So affirmo the opening paragraph of the Statement unanimously adopted by the 150 women attending the IV Quadrennial Assembly of the AICCW, held at St. Christopher's College of Education, Madras, 29 September-3 October 1986.

It was a celebration of unity. The opening worship on the theme, with Rev. Bertrice Wood, Moderator, World Council of Churches, Women's Commission as Preacher, set the tone for the Assembly. The women inaugurated

the Assembly in a solemn ceremony and Rev. Mrs. Navamani Peter outgoing President declared the Assembly open. Women of all denominations and from all parts of India and other parts of the globe transcended barriers of division to celebrate through talks, discussions, Bible studies, prayer, music and deliberations the power they derive from Christ, to participate with God in movements for change. The Assembly affirmed that 'We as women have the power and the ability to initiate and carry through social transformation.

It was a search for meaning. That the Indian women are slowly but steadily moving forward, was the view of Ms. Vibhuti Patel, Bombay, an activist and theoretician of the secular women's movement in India. The status of women as understood through statistical data, reports of violence in the newspaper or through personal stories of pain, do present a dismal picture. However, a historical

(Continued on page 16)

Edging out the Church

MR. MATHAI ZACHARIAH, Nagpur

With regard to the receipt of foreign grants by the Churches in India, two actions have recently been taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India. Both of them will have considerable effect on the functioning of the Churches, their work and witness. The first one is a circular letter, but addressed individually to all agencies receiving foreign grants, asking them whether they are publishing any 'registered newspaper', and if so to immediately close it down. 'Registered newspaper' includes not just newspapers but also magazines which are regularly published and are registered with the Registrar of Newspapers. Most of the Christian magazines come under this category. The letter also advised that if the agency wants to publish the 'newspaper' a separate Trust be formed (which of course cannot receive any foreign money). Whether permission will be granted when we ask for a new registration is yet to be seen. (The National Christian Council Review has been trying to change its name to National Council of Churches Review for the past six years, but has not succeeded !).

The second action was to tell some of the agencies receiving foreign grants that hereafter prior permission of the Government of India is to be sought, if they want foreign contribution. Knowing the way our bureaucracy works—with all the delays and corruption—this is going to create great inconvenience and hardship to many institutions, churches, etc. One suspects that this is only the beginning. Very soon all agencies may be asked to get prior permission.

The CCA News has made the following comment on these actions :

'The present crack-down must be seen as one more turn of the screw that the government will keep turning. The latest move of the government is not a casual reaction but yet another indication of the strength of the ever recurring foreign-hand syndrome in the government's perception of the causes of some of the country's problems in the socio-political and religious spheres. A change in the attitude being unlikely, Christians in India cannot be complacent about the dependence of so much of their work on resources from overseas.'

Very true. There is no use, we have learned from past experience, in requesting the Prime Minister or the Home Ministry to help us. The actions of the Government are deliberate and well-planned. What is asked of us is to make alternate plans and evolve resources and strategies that could stand pressures from the Government.

Just one example. The Government took over thirty-five years to implement its policy of eliminating foreign

missionaries from India. The decision was made by Jawaharlal Nehru himself (in spite of the fact that he was a 'friend' of the Christians). We argued, tried to put pressure, pleaded, begged. But it was of no avail essentially. The Government had the patience to wait for over three decades and slowly implement their policy. Many argued that it is our fundamental and ecumenical right to receive Christians from abroad. True, But the Government and our Hindu brethren did not see it that way. Their attitudes were motivated and loaded with anti-Christian feeling. One of the Home Ministers of the Government of India told us long ago, 'I think it is good for you Christians in India today not to have foreigners any more working for you.' In the given socio-cultural-political context in India, slowly it became clear to Christians, that they will have to make alternate plans. And when we assess the whole situation, the Indian Church has come out of this experience not any weaker.

I am sure, when we look back after many years, the issue of foreign money will also appear to be like the issue of foreign missionaries. Not that theologically or spiritually it is wrong in having the foreign missionaries or the foreign money here. In a way the 'catholic' nature of the Church demands of us to share the financial and personnel resources from other lands. But it is also expected of the Church to discern the signs of the times. Twenty years ago the NCCI published a booklet—'The Missionary and the Mission of the Church'—which in a way predicted the present turn of events. May be now, the Churches and NCCI make an indepth study of 'Money from Abroad and the Mission of the Church'.

The delegation that the NCCI sent to China to Visit the Church there has come back with the conviction that the Church becomes poor only when its faith becomes weak. Not only are we saved by 'faith alone', we live also by faith alone.

Eric Nelson said some time ago : 'The potential of the Church in India will not be realised until it stands stark naked.' Prophetic words. Difficult words for us. But words that need study, meditation and prayerful and purposive action. What is called for is a self-emptying of much that was never, or at least no longer relevant—pomp and prestige, institutional power, money power, patronage of the great, security provided by the powerful in society who benefit from our services which are made possible by money from abroad. We urgently need to meditate upon the Church's presence in India with empty hands. This would naturally lead us to a revision of the types and methods of service developed in earlier times, when we were innocent of the understanding of the dynamics of societal forces.

Courtesy : N.C.C. Review.

Sanctions against South Africa

EXTRACTS FROM UCCSA PRESS RELEASE

For the first time in the denomination's history, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) has voted overwhelmingly in favour of immediate and comprehensive sanctions against South Africa.

The Action was taken at its annual Assembly held in late September. Fewer than a handful of votes were cast against the resolution, which included full debate as to the implications of sanctions for southern Africa as a whole, including neighbouring frontline states.

The decision stems from a report delivered by the Assembly-appointed Task Force on Economic Justice and Sanctions, when the delegates recognised full sanctions as being 'one of the few remaining strategies left to achieve justice and peace by non-violent means'. It challenges every member of the UCCSA to meaningful action and to the possibility of ensuing hardship.

Delegates from the church, most of whose members are black, indicated they also wished to encourage their sister churches in the UK to bring pressure to bear on their government to support sanctions. The action also calls on the international community to support the frontline states in their efforts to become independent economically from South Africa, 'especially in regard to any punitive measures South Africa might take against them.'

The resolution, however, also addresses itself to those in the Church who are opposed to disinvestment by challenging them to become more active in the 'dismantling of the fundamental structures of apartheid'.

The Assembly agreed to call on the State President to terminate the State of Emergency, lift all banning

and restriction orders and release all detainees and political prisoners. Among those under detention at the time of the Assembly meeting were several ministers, and the 17-year-old daughter of the president of the UCCSA's Women's Committee. (She has recently been released).

In related actions, the Assembly also :

- * Deplored continuing police provocation, including the throwing of tear gas into churches during funeral services and the arrest of 'entire worshipping congregations' ;
- * called on the Governments of South Africa and the Homelands to cease all further forced removals and resettlements of those who are 'still being uprooted from their homes', despite official assurances to the contrary ;
- * affirmed the need for both the Church and state to have contact with political movements outside the country (such as the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress), and requested consideration by the executive committee that representatives from the ANC and PAC be invited to address the 1987 Assembly in Zimbabwe ;
- * resolved to set aside time at each assembly to listen to the voices of trade unionists, community leaders, students and workers ;
- * accepted the KAIROS Document as a 'challenge and message to the Church', urging that it be studied by local churches, since it 'prophetically and perceptively represents the cry of the oppressed of our land to which we need to respond' ;

Bishop Bunyan Joseph—A Tribute

Bishop Bunyan Joseph passed away on 25th October 1986 at Secunderabad after a short illness. He was 93. The funeral was attended by a large number of people of all denominations. At the funeral service Dr. A. B. Masilamani and a few other prominent leaders paid a fervent tribute to the life and work of the Bishop.

Bunyan Joseph was born in Cuddappah, Andhra Pradesh, on August 20, 1894. His father, Gideon Bunyan



Bishop Bunyan Joseph

was an ardent evangelist who served in the S. P. G. Mission field for a long time. When the family moved to Nandyal the S. P. G. High School helped Joseph to complete his education and settled down as a teacher. Later on he went to Madras and Dornakal for Theological studies along with his wife Lucy Prakashamani, daughter of the first ordained priest of the area, Rev. David Gnanabharanam. He was ordained in 1924 and was invited, by Bishop V. S. Azariah to teach in the Dornakal Divinity School. After serving as a teacher for sometime, he moved to Jammalamadugu where he was appointed as the Deanery Chairman. During this period he proved himself a keen evangelist and zealous worker touring in a number

of villages, preaching and converting many people, particularly from Reddies and the other high caste people, which included Venkataswamy Gupta who was baptised as Paul Gupta the founder of Hindustan Bible Institute at Madras.

Bishop A. B. Elliot, who succeeded Bishop Azariah, made Bunyan Joseph the canon of the Dornakal Cathedral and appointed him as the Diocesan Missioner. On the 27th of September 1947 Joseph was consecrated at the inaugural service of the Church of South India and installed as the Bishop of Anantapur-Kurnool Diocese which later on along with Cuddappah amalgamated into one Rayalaseema diocese. Since then his ministry was carried out in helping the dioceses of Madras, Dornakal and Medak.

Bishop Bunyan Joseph was a prolific writer, novelist, lyric writer and composer, who had several books published to his credit. SANGHA JYOTI ; SATYA JYOTHI ; YESU CHARITAM ; MEDITATIONS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER—are a few to name. His seven lyrics are included in the Andhra Christian Hymnal, of which Tedeum, rendered by him into Telugu, is indeed very popular.

He is survived by four sons Hosea, Abhisekam, Azariah, Vijayam and a daughter Margaret. God had granted him a full life, perhaps, the longest lived Bishop in India so far, and enabled him to see 22 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren.

His natural modesty and unassuming reticence, combined with his intimate acquaintances with his colleagues, made him a fitting personality to carry out his ministry successfully despite the odds he had to face. The long suffering, patience, love and gentleness with which he had exercised the shepherding of the flock had influenced many and would ever be an example to the young ministers in the Lord's Service. We extend our deep sympathy to his children.

—Editor

Bishop Sundaresan Bereaved

Mrs. Soundaram, wife of Bishop Sundaresan had her home call on 10th November 1986 at the age of 71. Her life was very eventful. Her early education was at Worlur (Tiruchirapalle) and then at Bentinck High School, Madras. She was trained as a teacher. As she was contemplating on her life's work, she thought it would be helpful if she married a good pastor. At that time her people informed her that there was a young Hindu convert, Sundaresan, doing B.D. studies at Bangalore, who would be ordained pastor. Later on they were united in the holy matrimony.

She gave herself fully as a pastor's wife and worked with him visiting the congregations, the sick ones in the families, conducting prayer meetings for the women, taking the sick to hospital etc. She used to visit Hindu homes and gave them the Gospel message. She associated herself with the women and child welfare centre at Palmaner. She used to bring women and introduce them to the work of the welfare centre. She arranged games and social activities for them. In the local industrial school for women, she used to conduct devotions on every alternate days. She took active part in the Women's

Fellowship meetings as its Secretary. As a pastor's wife she did not accept any salaried service. She gave herself fully for the Lord's work.

When they moved to Gooty, Medak and then to Dornakal to teach in the seminaries, she taught the wives of the men-students. She took charge of their evangelistic and social activities. She led them to villages to preach the Gospel, singing and praising God for His gift of salvation through Christ our Lord.

As Bishop's wife, she toured with the Bishop. While he was engaged with the men and congregational matters, she was with the women and their children. She would settle the misunderstandings among them and bring peace in the families.

She was very hospitable and looked after the visitors and guests. She was a real helpmate in all responsibilities. She prayed with people in distress. She was a devout and practising Christian, meek and humble. Thanks and glory and all praise be to God our heavenly Father for using her as His trustworthy servant. May her soul rest in peace.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

MADHYA KERALA

Reception at Sevananilayam

The sevananilayam committee hosted a reception to the leaders and delegates, who participated in the short course, which was conducted at The Christava Ashram Manganam, Kottayam, by the Christian Medical Association of India on 24th August 1986. The Very Rev. K. P. Philip commissary to the bishop of Madhya Kerala Diocese presided over the function. Rev. M. T. Tharian Vicar of the Ascension church welcomed the gathering. Mr. Mathew Varghese and Mr. George Jacob placed before the audience the present work of the project and its future action to be taken. It was appreciated by the participants. Dr. Mukerjee, C.M.A.I., Dr. George Joseph C.S.I. Synod Healing ministry, Rev. Dr. Peter Bellamy, W.C.C., Rev. George Isaac, Vellore Medical College and Rev. I.C. Kurian Referred it as a novel idea of the church's action with possibility of expansion and need deep study. They all praised the action of the Ascension Church for its far sightedness. Mementoes were presented to each participants. There was a short discussion on the scope of the sevananilayam.

'Sevananilaya' is a service project by the Ascension C.S.I. Church Kottayam, as part of its Diamond Jubilee Celebration programme. It is situated at Arpookara Panchayat in Kottayam near The Govt. Medical College Hospital. It started on 4th May 1978, was partly completed and opened for service on the Ascension day 16th May 1980. We completed the construction of the two stories of the proposed three-storey building by the active participation, help and earnest support of the members of the parish, who stays far and near. We have a beautiful chapel, twenty-one wellfurnished rooms to be given on (nominal) rent to the poor patients, who come to the medical college and to those who accompany them. We have a fulltime chaplain. We help the needy poor

ones with money and medicine wherever possible. The entire proceeds raised by way of rent from the project is given away to the needy patients. Plans are afoot to buy an ambulance to help the poor as ambulances are less in number. We are thinking to expand the projects by starting a counselling centre.

REV. M. T. THARIAN

Vicar, Ascension Church, Kottayam

KANYAKUMARI DIOCESE

C.S.I. Day Seminar on Church Union

The Committee on Work Among the Young of Kanyakumari Diocese arranged a one-day seminar on Church Union, which was held on 27th September, 1986 at the C.S.I. Church, Christucoil. 150 men and women, mostly youth, participated in the deliberations of the seminar. The seminar started with devotion by Rev. V. Emmanuel. Three illuminating talks were given by Dr. J. W. Gladston, Mr. Paul Sudakhar and Rev. S. D. Duthie on the structure of the Church of South India, The problems of Church Union and the Church Union and the Kingdom of God respectively. The participants were divided into 10 groups and detailed discussions were done on the issues on Church Union. The reports of various groups highlights their sincere interest in the life of the Church.

The C.S.I. Church, Christucoil hosted a seminar and Rev. P. J. Jeyaseelan, Dr. Samuel Dhason and Prof. P. Joseph Yesudian managed the orderly proceeding of the Seminar. The local Church people had a spiritually reviving evening when Rev. D. Justin Devadhason preached the gospel through Kathakalechebam.

REV. G. DEVAKATAKSHAM

Youth Worker

In Christ :—(Continued from p. 12)

overview of the autonomous women's movement in India shows how women are forging ahead, breaking through hurdles that obstruct their path. Responding to her talk, Mrs. E. V. Mathew, representing church women said, 'Much good work is being carried out by church women's organisations. But we have to ask ourselves honestly 'Are we confronting and taking action on the problems of socially and economically oppressed women—slum, rural and tribal women become an integral part of the programme of church women's organisations?' She urged church women to act with the secular women's movement on various issues.

Fr. Samuel Rayan (S.J., Delhi) made a lucid and challenging presentation on the Assembly theme showing how, 'In face, in a history of women's marginalization, Jesus decided to give to women primacy of place in matters concerning the foundations of the Faith'. He described with examples how Biblical culture was oppressive to women and how it was also liberative. He spoke of women who took dangerous political steps to liberate their people—their deeds must be remembered and celebrated. By strength of their faith they defy forces of death—Deborah, Judith, the daughters of Zelophehad were mentioned. 'That means women have a history, you have a history of oppression, of conversion, of liberation,' he reminded the Assembly.

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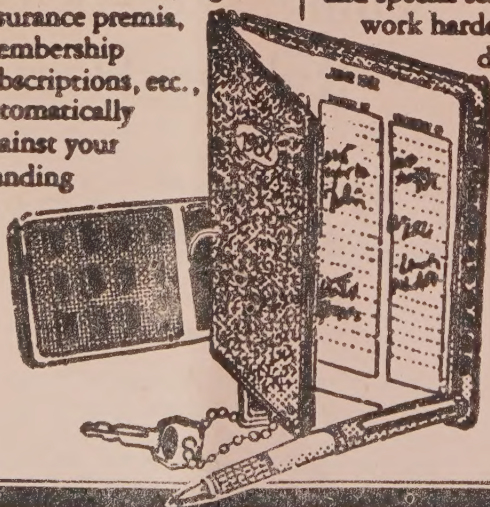
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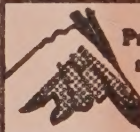
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